

**ᄀᄀᄀᄀ**  
**(Wah-Zha-Zhe)**  
**Early Learning Academy**

**Family and Student Handbook**

**Serving children from 6 weeks to Twelve Years.**

**Pawhuska  
Skiatook  
Hominy  
Fairfax**

**Providing excellence in education while  
revitalizing Osage culture and language.**

**2018-2019**

**Administrative Offices  
100 West Main, Suite Mezzanine  
Pawhuska, OK 74056**

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If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please feel free to contact our office, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (CST).

### **Osage Nation WELA Administrative Offices**

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## HOURS OF OPERATION & LOCATION

Classes are Year Round and on an Academic Calendar

### **Pawhuska WELA & Wraparound**

216 W. 15<sup>th</sup> St.  
Pawhuska, OK 74056

7:30 – 8:30      Early Arrivals  
8:30 – 2:30      Class Times  
2:30 – 5:00      Wrap Around Care

### **Hominy WELA & Wraparound**

100 North Price  
Hominy, OK 74035

7:15 – 8:30      Early Arrivals  
8:30 – 2:30      Class Times  
2:30 – 5:15      Wrap Around Care

### **Fairfax WELA**

401 S. 8<sup>th</sup>  
Fairfax, OK 74637

7:15 – 8:30      Early Arrivals  
8:30 – 2:30      Class Times  
2:30 – 5:15      Wrap Around Care

### **Fairfax Wraparound**

903 W. McKinley  
Fairfax, OK 74637

### **Skiatook WELA**

205 S. Hominy  
Skiatook, OK 74070

7:15 – 8:30      Early Arrivals  
8:30 – 2:30      Class Times  
2:30 – 5:15      Wrap Around Care

### **Skiatook Wraparound**

1801 W. Oak  
Skiatook, OK 74070

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Vision**

Our vision is to become the model for excellence in education throughout Indian Country and beyond.

### **Mission**

Our mission is to provide a premier education for our Osage children through project-driven and personalized curriculum utilizing proven teaching methods, cutting-edge technology and a secure environment. We will foster an environment of communication and collaboration by building strong relationships between students, educators, parents and community members. The Osage people must construct a foundation for the present and future success of Osage children and the Nation as a whole by using methods that support language revitalization, nation building, sovereignty and the development of accomplished young adults who will discover their talents and leave their footprints for those who follow.

### **Core Values**

- Passion
- Respect
- Innovation
- Dedication
- Excellence
- Compassion
- Motivation
- Truth
- Humility

### **Pillars of Learning**

ᏊᏚᏚᏚᏚ Early Learning Academies (WELA) provide a comprehensive child development program that promotes and encourages individual growth and development of young children, aged 6 weeks to twelve years. We strive to provide our students with a nurturing environment and meaningful learning experiences that support cognitive, social, emotional, and academic growth. We support and encourage parent and family involvement, and provide the services necessary for your child to be successful. The four pillars of our program include:

- Osage Lifeways and Nation Building
- Family and Community
- Academics
- Health

### **Academic Integrity and Accreditation**

Our WELA Centers maintain a license through the Oklahoma Department of Human Services and/or the Osage Nation Community Outreach Department's Child Care Services Program. These licenses ensure that our centers comply with all applicable health and safety codes, and that student and staff records are up-to-date and maintained.

WELA strives to inform the parents/guardians with students attending WELA of the policies and procedures followed by our staff as well as those that apply to our students and parents/guardians.

### **Program Goals**

- Surround our children with positive role models while creating a nurturing and caring environment to develop the whole child.
- Maintain a highly qualified staff and a family-like atmosphere.

- Integrate Osage culture and language into each student's daily learning environment.

### **Goals for Children**

- Learn through real life opportunities that engage children in learning about the world around them.
- Support our students to become grounded as capable, independent, intelligent and driven human beings.
- Have freedom to discover and learn in their surroundings on a daily basis in developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor classrooms.

### **Goals for Families**

- Strengthen and empower families to learn together while bridging the gap between home and school.

### **Curriculum and Reggio Emilia**

The ᄀᄀᄀᄀ Early Learning Academies use Create Curriculum to exceed state academic standards for each age level of the students. All lessons are adapted to fit the needs of the students in the classrooms. In addition, Osage language is incorporated and embedded within the daily routines to support and revitalize our Osage language and culture. The environment, teaching methods and activities are implemented using the Reggio Emilia approach, which is an innovative and inspiring approach to early childhood education that values and supports children as strong, independent and capable learners whose inquisitive nature supports knowledge and relationships with others.

### **Wrap Around Care**

The ᄀᄀᄀᄀ Early Learning Academy offers Wrap Around, an extension of the day, through our after school care program for children ages 5 years old through 12 years old. The program extends until 5:00 each day, and is offered at select locations, including Skiatook, Pawhuska, and Fairfax. The Wrap Around program provides a place for school-age children to interact and socialize with peers, read and work on homework, learn the Osage language, and engage in outdoor activities. Enrollment in this program is limited by space. Please see your designated WELA center manager for enrollment applications and transportation information. The admission procedure and requirements for Wrap Around programs is the same for all children attending ᄀᄀᄀᄀ Early Learning Academies. Due to limited classroom space and transportation, public school children will have priority for enrolment.

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## ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

Admission to WELA is based on a combination of criteria, including Osage membership, Osage preference and Native American preference, the student's age, and classroom availability. All students enrolling or attending the WELA Early Learning Academies must provide documentation for one of the following to receive Osage preference or Native American preference:

- **Osage Nation Membership number for the child enrolling, or**
- **Tribal Membership of Certified Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) for the child enrolling, if other than Osage.**

### **Osage Preference**

- Osage preference will be given to students from Osage families.
- Parents/guardians must provide an Osage membership number for the child to be verified through the Osage Nation Membership Department.
- For infants under six (6) months of age who have not yet been enrolled, the parent or guardian must furnish the membership number for the enrolled parent or guardian.
- An Osage family is defined as a household with at least one legally enrolled member of the Osage Nation. Verification must be furnished for each student.

### **Native American Preference**

- Parents/guardians must provide a copy of the student's tribal membership card or Certified Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB), or a letter from the native nation stating enrollment process has begun. If the child does not have their own CDIB or Tribal Membership number, a copy of the parent's CDIB or Tribal Membership number will be temporarily accepted for Native American students enrolling until the child's CDIB or Tribal Membership number is obtained.

### **Waiting List**

- A waiting list will be developed each year for students who applied but were not selected. As enrollment slots become available in the classroom, parents/guardians will be contacted and offered an enrollment slot.

The enrollment process begins in March of each year for the upcoming school year beginning in August. Enrollment packets are available on the Osage Nation website or at any of the WELA locations. Students attending WELA must re-enroll at your designated site each year. The following information must be **completed and received** before the student will be permitted to attend. Enrollment will not be processed for any student who is unable to provide the required documentation.

- Enrollment form signed by the parent/guardian
- Authorization forms signed by the parent/guardian
- Enrollment contract
- Current immunization records
- Parent/guardian contact form
- Emergency contact information
- Signed acknowledgement form for handbook signed by the parent/guardian
- Completed CACFP form
- Completed Compliance File Notification form

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## **ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL TIMES**

The WELA Early Learning Academy expects students and families to be punctual and maintain regular attendance. Classes begin promptly at 8:30 each day, and lunch counts are taken so the appropriate amount of food is prepared for the children each day. Parents should report an absence, late arrival, or early departure to the child's teacher or center manager by 9:30 a.m. To ensure our student to teacher ratios are maintained, children should not be dropped off earlier than the designated drop off time for child's center. Students should be picked up by an authorized family member or adult by the designated closing time for your child's center. Parents should park and walk their child to their designated area at the WELA center. Parents must sign their child in and out each day, and all adults should be listed on the child's contact and information sheet, Student Pick Up Authorization Form, as persons permitted to drop off and pick up the child. The authorized person must present their driver's license to the staff before the student may leave the premises. Current contact information should be kept and communicated with WELA staff at all times to ensure the safety of each child. Any guardianship or court mandated documents should be given to the center manager to ensure the safety of the child.

### **Dismissal**

Only the individuals listed on the Student Pick Up Authorization Form will be allowed to remove a child from the WELA Early Learning Academy. If anyone not on the form is to pick up, then the form must be updated in person by the parent or guardian. If there are court orders or other areas of concern regarding a child's interaction with outside individuals, that information must be provided.

### **Field Trips**

Families will be notified in advance of each field trip through teacher communication, notes sent home, or email messages. **It is not the policy of the WELA Early Learning Academy staff and teachers to delay departures to accommodate late arrivals.** When traveling, students will always be in seat belts or car seats, depending on the age of the children attending the field trip. Teachers and staff will be equipped with first aid kits, cell phones, and parent contact information for each child. If a child arrives after their class has left, parents may be required to make alternate arrangements for care that day, or join the class field trip on their own. Space at our WELA centers is limited, and joining another classroom may not be available due to student to teacher ratios mandated through the Department of Human Services (DHS).

### **DHS Subsidy and Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Cards**

Department of Human Services (DHS) subsidy clients must swipe their EBT card in order to check in/check out. If a client fails to swipe the EBT card, DHS *cannot* back-track billing beyond ten days; therefore, the responsibility of payment will fall solely upon the parent/guardian and payment arrangements must be made with the center manager.

### **Late Arrival**

Your child will be learning so much every single day, and it is very important that students arrive on time. A late arrival is any time after 9:30 a.m. If you know your child is going to be late due to a scheduled appointment, please contact your child's teacher by 9:30 a.m. so appropriate teacher to student ratios are met and the correct quantity of food is prepared for meals.

### **Late Pick Up**

Five minutes past closing, the WELA Early Learning Academy will call the parent/guardian. If no contact is made, the staff will then call the first person on the Student Pick-Up Authorization Form to pick up the student. If no one is reached, the staff will continue to contact the other individuals on the list until someone is reached. The WELA staff will make attempts to contact the parent/guardian at fifteen minutes past the closing time. At thirty minutes past closing, if no one has been reached, the

staff member is required to call the local police department or Osage Nation Police Department, and the Department of Human Services or the Osage Nation Social Services Department depending on the jurisdiction of the student. For every one minute a student remains at a 4/2/20 Early Learning Academy after closing the parent/guardian will be charged \$1.00 per student. This late charge must be paid before the student is allowed to return to the 4/2/20 Early Learning Academy.

If a parent/guardian has three late pick-ups within a two-month period, their student may lose their enrollment status.

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## ATTENDANCE and EXPULSION POLICY

The ᄀᄁᄂᄃ Early Learning Academy strives to provide Osage children with a premier education that includes Osage language revitalization and nation building, community and family, health, and academics. Unlike a day care facility, our WELA sites are early childhood education academies that work to prepare our students for their academic careers in the public school system, Head Start, or Osage Nation Immersion. It is the policy of WELA to treat our students as they would be treated in a pre-kindergarten learning institution, with regard to attendance. Therefore, regular daily attendance is imperative. If students must be absent for longer than thirty (30) days due to a family situation such as vacations, visiting family, or a family crisis the parents/guardians must notify staff so that the absences can be excused and documented.

### Attendance

Class begins promptly at 8:30 each day. Attendance is taken at 8:30 so the appropriate amount of food and snacks are prepared for the day. It is important that your child arrives on time each day to receive the most out of the educational learning experiences. Each day your child will interact with peers to develop social and interpersonal skills, problem solving skills, and critical thinking skills. **If your child is ill or will not be at school, the ᄀᄁᄂᄃ Early Learning Academy requests that you contact you're your child's teacher or center manager before 9:30 for all ages.**

Parents/guardians must pay for all days that a student is not in attendance; this ensures the student does not lose their enrollment status. The Osage Nation will adjust monthly balances for days WELA is closed.

### Expulsion

The ᄀᄁᄂᄃ Early Learning Academy takes the education of our young children very seriously. Some reasons that may hinder a child's enrollment status includes:

- Failure to pay
- Routinely late dropping off or picking up a child
- Failure to complete the required forms
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Failure of child to adjust to the facility after a reasonable amount of time
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property
- Our inability to meet the child's needs
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations
- Serious illness of child

We appreciate as much advance notice as possible when a child withdraws from WELA. Anyone who ends WELA services and has a balance that is outstanding will need to have the account settled within thirty (30) days. All accounts not settled within thirty (30) days will be turned over to the Osage Nation Attorney General Office for collection.

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## **BELONGINGS and ITEMS FROM HOME**

### **Belongings That Stay at Home**

The WELA Early Learning Academy teachers and staff request that all toys remain at home, unless otherwise stated by the teacher for a special sharing time, or classroom activity. We have so many activities planned each day that toys and other items brought from home, such as jewelry, money, watches, cards, etc., are lost or broken. If any items are brought to school, WELA cannot be responsible for those items. In addition, any weapon, including guns, knives, or other type of weapon (toy or real) are never to be brought to the WELA Early Learning Academies. Any student bringing any type of weapon could be sent home immediately and be subject to loss of enrollment status.

### **Items Allowed from Home**

Families may wish to send birthday treats or snacks to school in honor of their student's birthday. To say in compliance with Department of Human Services guidelines, families may send healthy, prepackaged, store-bought foods or snacks. Please coordinate with your child's teacher to make arrangements if you would like to send snacks.

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## BITING AT SCHOOL

### **Biting**

It is the policy of WELA to not only provide a safe learning environment to our students but also to promote healthy behaviors. For this reason, biting, as a behavior, is taken very seriously. Academy staff will work to eliminate this behavior among our students through communication and redirection.

Biting is one of the most common and most difficult behaviors to understand and prevent. It occurs without warning, is difficult to defend against, and provokes strong emotional responses in the biter, the victim, the parent/guardian, and the caregivers involved. For most toddlers, the biting stage will pass with age. Most times, toddlers do this as a way to get what they want from another toddler. They are in the process of learning what is socially acceptable and what is not. For other students, biting may become a persistent problem and could stem from a variety of reasons: teething, frustration, boredom, inadequate language skills, a change in their environment, or protection.

No matter what the cause, biting causes ill feelings toward all involved. It does help, however, to be aware of a potential problem before it happens, and to have a plan of action in place.

### **Steps of Discipline**

- The biter is immediately and calmly removed from the area. WELA staff will tell the student that biting hurts and it is not okay to bite.
- The biter will not be allowed to return to the same play area, and will be directed to another play area for a few minutes until the situation has calmed. Additional statements will likely be communicated to the student such as, "I know you want the truck, but we cannot bite to take the truck away."
- An accident/injury report will be completed by WELA staff, and the parents/guardians of the biter and injured student will be notified and given a copy of the report.
- Parents will be notified of all incidents and the student may be sent home at the discretion of the Center Manager.

### **For the Injured Student**

- The student will be separated from the biter, and comforted by the staff.
- First-Aid will be administered immediately, as necessary.
- An accident/injury report will be completed by WELA staff, and the parents/guardians of the biter and injured student will be notified and given a copy of the report.
- Parents will be notified of all incidents and the student may be sent home at the discretion of the Center Manager.

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## COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

### **Custodial and Non-Custodial Parental Rights**

It is our policy that a parent who is awarded legal custody of a child by court action shall file a copy of the current court decree with the 4/2/20 Early Learning Academy. If the custodial parent does not wish the child to be released to the non-custodial parent, an appropriate written instruction, such as a court order, should be filed with the 4/2/20 Early Learning Academy. Absent a court decree to the contrary, both parents have the right to view the student's records, receive progress reports, visit the child at the 4/2/20 Early Learning Academy, and participate in parent teacher conferences. Contact from the 4/2/20 Early Learning Academy to the parents will be primarily made through the custodial parent.

### **Family Communication**

Building strong partnerships between families and staff members is a goal of the 4/2/20 Early Learning Academies. Parents are the most important teacher in a child's life, and building strong, supportive, and respectful relationships is the key to successful school and family connection. We strive to make the transition between home and school smooth and positive for the children we serve. To support this goal, teachers and staff will communicate through notes sent home, email messages, and phone calls to keep parents up-to-date on events and class information. For infants, daily notes will be sent home with each student at the end of the day so parents will know daily napping, diapering, and feeding events. For older students, daily and/or weekly notes will be sent home.

Parents are encouraged to keep teachers notified if there will be a change in a child's daily routine, such as a doctor's appointment or a change in the pick-up schedule. Always let teachers know if your child will be leaving early so we can help prepare and have your child ready on time.

Information concerning a change in a child's routine at home, major transitions, or other information that parents feel would be helpful for the 4/2/20 Early Learning Academy teachers and staff to know in order to help your child will always be kept confidential. We encourage strong parent and teacher partnerships and communication.

### **Daily Schedule and Reports**

It is the policy of 4/2/20 Early Learning Academies to work with parents/guardians and keep them fully informed of their students' progress, activities, achievements, challenges, and behaviors. For this reason, parents/guardians with students in infant and toddler classrooms will receive daily notes regarding their student's eating schedule, diaper changes, nap times and activities and information highlighting the week's activities and events. Parents/guardians with students in Pre-K classrooms will receive reports regarding behavior, understanding of new concepts, participation in class activities, etc.

Weekly lesson plans will also be posted inside each classroom with detailed outlines of daily activities.

### **Parent Teacher Conferences**

Any parent/guardian may schedule a conference with a teacher anytime during the week to discuss attendance, behavior, or progress. Regular Parent Teacher Conferences are scheduled 3 times per year. Information and sign-up schedules will go home as the conference times near.

If there is any situation or injury from home that may affect the student, please inform your student's teacher.

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## **DISCIPLINE AT SCHOOL**

### **Behavioral Expectations**

The WELA Early Learning Academy teachers and staff are committed to the education that develops the whole child. We work daily to help students become increasingly more self-managing and socially responsible as independent and responsible learners. Our goal is to help each student learn how to express their feelings and emotions in a positive, acceptable way, and to enhance each child's ability to develop interpersonal relationships with teachers and peers. The WELA Early Learning Academy teachers and staff model respect and strive to build positive character by targeting positive growth. The areas of targeted core values are:

- Passion
- Respect
- Innovation
- Dedication
- Excellence
- Compassion
- Motivation
- Truth
- Humility

### **Discipline in Early Childhood**

- Positive, clear, specific expectations given by teachers.
- Reinforcing positive behavior when it happens through praise, high-fives, hugs, pats on the back, etc.
- Giving children freedom to encourage success.

### **Misbehavior in Early Childhood**

Misbehavior can usually be handled by:

- Redirecting the child to an appropriate activity or area, or a positive alternative.
- Using natural and logical consequences.
- Helping the child to talk through the situation by “using their words” to problem solve.
- Allowing the child time and space to regroup, under close supervision.
- Losing a privilege.

### **Serious Misbehavior Consequences**

More serious or frequent misbehavior may be managed by:

- Spending a short time being separated from others to calm and regroup.
- Explaining to the child how to cooperate in the future.
- Developing a behavior chart to encourage positive behavior and choices through reinforcement.
- Communicating with parents to find a solution to improve behaviors.
- If the student is putting others in danger, the parents/guardians will be notified to pick up the student.
- All incidents will be documented with Incident/Accident Reports and placed in the student's file, parents/guardians will be notified, and a copy of the incident report will be sent home.
- Three (3) incident reports will result in a parent-teacher conference set up with the center manager to develop a behavioral plan. A referral for a screening, or meeting with a counselor may be given to the parent/guardian after consultation with WELA Early Learning Academy contracted professionals. If after referral for screening and/or counseling, a parent/guardian refuses to seek counseling or obtain a screening for their student and incidents continue to occur, the student may be suspended or dismissed from WELA.

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## DISABILITIES

At WELA it is our goal to ensure that all children with disabilities have an appropriate and supportive environment that allows them to receive the services needed to meet their unique needs. The WELA Early Learning Academies will follow the guidelines found under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which requires that child care providers not discriminate against persons with disabilities on the basis of disability, providing children and parents with disabilities with an equal opportunity to participate in the child care center's programs and services. More information can be found at [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov).

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**FEES and PAYMENT POLICY**

Each student who attends our WELA Early Learning Academies is part of a learning community that provides meaningful learning experiences which support cognitive, social, and emotional growth each day. Our academies are maintained and equipped with up-to-date technology, interactive learning materials and supplies, outdoor equipment, and alarm systems to keep children safe at all times. Our curriculum and rigor is current with research that supports early childhood education and development. In addition, nutritional meals and snacks are provided during the day, and students eat with their peers family-style and learn and recite Osage prayers. The cost of WELA supports the quality of education and learning experiences provided for the students attending our WELA Early Learning Academies.

**Fees and Payments**

- Payments are accepted at WELA locations and are due by the **10<sup>th</sup> of the following month.**
- Student enrollment status will be put on hold until the bill is paid in full by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following month. Bills left unpaid for thirty (30) days will be sent to the Attorney General’s Office for collection.
- More detailed requirements are outlined in the WELA enrollment contract.

WELA Early Learning Academy Fees		
Age of Child	Estimate Monthly Fee	Daily Fee
6 weeks - 2 Years	\$500	\$25
3 Years - 4 Years	\$360	\$18

Wrap Around Monthly Rates		
Tribal Membership	Estimate Monthly Wrap Around Fee	Daily Fee
Osage	\$200.00	\$10
Non-Osage	\$300.00	\$15

**Payment Options and Aid**

The families of students enrolled and attending WELA have several payment options available to them. It is the policy of WELA to make every attempt to aid those students wishing to attend our centers to be able to do so by providing financial assistance when possible.

- The Child Care Assistance Program, through our Osage Nation Community Outreach Department allows families to receive financial assistance. Payment is received by the Osage Nation Community Outreach Department from the funding agency and families are asked to make a co-payment by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following month. (For example: July’s bill will be due August 10<sup>th</sup>).
- State Department of Human Services (DHS) childcare assistance may also be used. Parents/guardians will need to complete the required forms at the State DHS office.

**Language Class Fee Waiver**

Among the goals of the Principal Chief are the expression and retention of the Osage Culture and Language. In order to expand the language, WELA is offering a Language Class Fee Waiver to Native American families.

- One (1) Language Class Fee Waiver of \$200 *per Osage or Native household, per month* can be earned by attending Osage Language courses.
  - A parent must attend one class per week, totaling 4 language classes per month to earn a \$200 Language Fee Waiver.
  - Participants must be the mother, father, or legal guardian of an Osage or Native American child enrolled in WELA.
  - Only (1) Language Class Fee Waiver of \$200 may be applied *per household* each month.
  - Language Class Fee Waivers may not be applied towards Wrap Around Fees.
- To receive a Language Class Fee Waiver, individuals must arrive no later than fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled start time to receive an authorized signature on their language log. If the arrival time is later than 15 minutes, credit will not be received for that class to apply towards the fee waiver. Individuals leaving class fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled end time will not receive credit for that class towards the fee waiver.
- Household family members opting for the Osage class waiver must have a language log signed by the authorized instructor for each class in order to offset the cost of fee for each class attended. Parents/Guardians are responsible for submitting their signed language log to your child’s Center Manager in person on the first business day of the month, but no later than the fifth business day of each month.

Please see your Center Manager for a Language Fee Waiver Log. This log is also available on the ᏍᏏᏏᏍᏏ Early Learning Academy website.

ᏍᏏᏏᏍᏏ Early Learning Academy Osage Language Class Fee Waiver Example			
Age of Child	Rate Per Month	Osage Language Credits (4 Classes)	Total
6 Weeks – 2 Years	\$500.00	\$200.00	\$300.00
3 Years – 4 Years	\$360.00	\$200.00	\$160.00

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## HEALTH and MEDICATION

When a student is absent due to illness, the parent/guardian must notify the Academy **no later than 9:30 a.m.** on the day of the absence; this will allow the WELA Early Learning Academy staff to take any precautions necessary to protect the other students should the illness be contagious.

### **Fever, Diarrhea, and Vomiting**

Children should only attend the WELA Early Learning Academy when they are well and fever-free. Children will be sent home when their temperature is 100.4 degrees or greater, or if a child shows changes in behavior or symptoms that indicate illness, such as lethargy, irritability, or persistent crying, or severe coughing. If a child has diarrhea, or runny or watery stools with increased or abnormal frequency, or if a student becomes ill during a school day or field trip, parents will be notified and the child should be picked up within thirty minutes.

Children must remain free of fever (99 degrees or lower), diarrhea, and vomiting for 24 hours **without medication** before returning to school. Any doctor's notes and releases must be given to the center manager.

### **Contagious Illness and Rashes**

Any contagious illness, such as head lice, measles, chicken pox, fifth disease, hand foot and mouth, yellowish skin or eyes, eye discharge that includes thick mucus or pus draining from the eye, or any other infestation or rash must be reported to the WELA Early Learning Academy immediately, excluding diaper rash. Exposure notices will be sent to parents/guardians when their student is exposed to a contagious disease. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

### **Medication**

It is the preference of the WELA Early Learning Academy for medicine to be dispensed at home. If absolutely necessary, WELA staff will only administer medication to a student if the parent/guardian provides the WELA Early Learning Academy with a doctor's note (for over the counter medication) or a current prescription for the student containing dosage instructions.

Over the counter medication must be administered to the student when that medication is provided by the parent/guardian in the original container and labeled with the student's full name. Over the counter medication must be accompanied by a doctor's note indicating dosage (if different from package directions) and length of time the student will need to take the medication. All medication will be inaccessible to students and locked in the main office of each site. Each dose administered is recorded on an individual medication log by staff, which will be made available to parents/guardians upon request.

The parent/guardian is required to fill out a separate form for each medication that is to be administered indicating the proper dosage and time to administer the medication. Medication is returned to the parent/guardian when it is out-of-date or if the student has withdrawn from WELA.

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## IMMUNIZATIONS

The ᄀᄀᄀᄀ Early Learning Academy center managers will determine that the students' immunizations against vaccine preventable diseases are up-to-date according to the requirements in the schedule of well child care by the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) program for the State of Oklahoma. Immunization requirements incorporate the latest recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

Osage and Native students without up-to-date immunizations will be given the option of working with ᄀᄀᄀᄀ Early Learning Academy staff in order to receive needed vaccinations.

Families whose religious or personal beliefs, or health restrictions conflict with this requirement must obtain a certificate of exemption from the Oklahoma Department of Health or the Osage Nation prior to the student's first day of school.

Without an approved exemption, parents/guardians wishing not to immunize their child will not be able to attend the ᄀᄀᄀᄀ Early Learning Academy.

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## **INFANT and TODDLER NEEDS**

### **Infant and Toddler Needs**

The 4AZAZO Early Learning Academies believes in creating nurturing and comfortable environments for the children we serve. The teachers and staff create learning environments that keep children alert and engaged throughout the day in order to allow them to take full advantage of their learning opportunities. In addition, the teachers and staff are responsive to the needs of each child. We know that to support the development of the whole child, children must be able to know and trust that their needs are being met.

### **Infant Safe Sleep**

Students may take a nap during the day to help them recharge and refocus. The 4AZAZO Early Learning Academies provide individual cots or mats for each student attending the academy at least five (5) hours a day. The academies follow the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) guidelines and requirement for Infant Safe Sleep Environments.

- Infants sleep directly on a tight fitting sheet covering the mattress.
- Infants birth through three months of age may be swaddled with an infant-sized, thin fabric, such as a receiving blanket, only when requested by a parent and permission is maintained and the infant is not mobile enough to move the fabric over his or her face.
- Infants are placed on their backs for sleeping.

### **Toddler Rest Time**

- Cots or mats are sanitized once a week.
- Sheets/bedding items are washed at the end of each week.
- Pillows will not be used.
- Children's heads and faces are not covered while resting.
- Crib sheets are changed and sanitized on a daily basis.

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## MILESTONES and ASSESSMENTS

Students will receive a pre-assessment upon enrollment in a WELA Early Learning Academy, as well as when they enter a new age-level classroom. Post-assessments will be performed when the student has reached an age or displays mastery in one or more higher age levels to determine that the student is ready to advance. The data obtained through the pre- and post-assessments will be used to guide instruction and to determine areas of mastery, as well as areas that need additional support. Early childhood development is such an exciting time, and being able to support your child as they develop a strong foundation for learning is our goal. Our teachers understand that children learn and develop at different rates, and each child will be supported at their own levels cognitively, socially, and emotionally. WELA staff will use the assessment tools and checklists associated with Creative Curriculum, as well as through daily observation.

### **Infants**

Infants will be exposed daily to the Osage language and curriculum content provided through the program. Milestones for infant development will be recorded and shared with parents.

### **Toddlers, 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds**

Student assessments are based on the objectives identified through the Creative Curriculum Program, which include the areas of:

- Social-Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Language Development
- Cognitive Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science & Technology
- Social Studies
- The Arts
- WELA O (Osage Language)

### **Toilet Training**

It is the policy of WELA Early Learning Academies is to support and encourage students and their families in meeting many of the milestones in the life of a young child, including toilet training. Toilet training is a huge milestone for your child, and we want to make it a positive experience for all. Please tell your child's teacher when you begin toilet training so that we may assist your child by reinforcing the efforts at WELA. Please send extra clothes for occasional accidents.

Academy staff will work with parents/guardians to develop a toilet training plan for each student so that efforts at home and school align.

We strongly encourage parents/guardians who want their student enrolled or transitioned to a pre-kindergarten classroom to have their student trained prior to moving forward.

### **Class Placement**

The WELA Early Learning Academies strive to provide learning environments and classrooms that maximize each student's opportunities for success. Through the assessments and data gathered for each student, WELA Early Learning Academy teachers will be able to best determine student placement based on the student's age, physical, emotional, cognitive, and social maturity.

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## LICE AT SCHOOL

It is the policy of WELA Early Learning Academies to protect all students in our care from transmittable conditions that may be brought into the Academy, including not only contagious disease but also parasitic conditions and infestations. Academy staff is required to check for lice on a regular basis. If a student has nits or lice, the parent/guardian will be contacted and required to pick up the student immediately.

Parents/guardians are required to pick up the student within 30 minutes of being contacted. A student may not return to WELA for a 24-hour incubation period, and until they are lice and nit free.

Upon return to the WELA Early Learning Academy, the student will be inspected for lice and/or nits prior to being allowed to enter his/her classroom.

If the problem persists because the parent or guardian refuses to cooperate with the prescribed treatment, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services and/or Osage Nation Social Services will be notified.

All students will receive an exposure notice when a lice incident has occurred in his/her classroom.

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## NUTRITION

It is the policy of the WELA Early Learning Academies to encourage healthy lifestyles among our students, including nutrition. All meals are planned to meet the students' nutritional needs, and follow Department of Human Services guidelines and licensing requirements. Monthly menus will be posted in each classroom as well as being sent home. The WELA Early Learning Academies reserve the right to make any changes to the meal plan at any time.

### **Breakfast, Lunch and Snacks**

Breakfast, lunch, and snacks are included in WELA Early Learning Academy fee for your child each day. The meals prepared are well-balanced and planned to meet the Department of Human Services (DHS) licensing requirements. Menus are planned each month, and portion sizes are determined through children's ages and daily nutritional needs.

- **Infants**  
Parents must provide formula, breastmilk, or baby food for infants until they are ready to eat "table food." Infants will be exposed to and included in the Osage prayers during mealtimes.
  
- **Toddlers, 3-year olds, and 4-year-olds**  
All meals are served family-style, with students learning and reciting Osage prayers. The students will eat at tables with their classmates and teachers.

### **USDA and CACFP**

All families are required to fill out and submit the USDA and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) forms. These forms determine eligibility for aid based of household income. Even if you do not think you will qualify, all families must fill out and submit the documents to your designated center manger to keep our center licensure up-to-date.

Per Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), if your child requires any special dietary needs or restrictions, the WELA center must have a doctor's note written on the CACFP doctor's note template with substitutions for what the child requires. In addition, if a parent is providing special foods for their child they must bring all the meal components, as WELA cannot claim the meal through CACFP.

### RATIOS and GROUP SIZES

The goal of WELA is to provide teacher to student interaction that best promotes learning and supports our young students. The physical size of each classroom is also a factor in determining the optimal number of students in each group setting. WELA will work to provide a higher staff/student ratio as funds are available for each age group. At a minimum, the following teacher to student ratio is appropriate according to licensing standards of a childcare center:

Single Age Classroom	Teacher to Student Ratio	Maximum Class size
Infants (up to 12 months)	1:4	8
1-year-olds	1:6	12
2-year-olds	1:8	16
3-year-olds	1:12	24
4-year-olds	1:15	30
5-year-olds	1:15	30

Mixed Age Classroom	Teacher to Student Ratio	Maximum Class size
Infants, 1-year-olds, and 2-year olds (in any combination; does <b>not</b> include a 3-year old or older)	1:6 No more than two infants per teaching personnel	12
Infants and older (includes a 3-year old or older)	1:8 No more than two under 2 years of age per teaching personnel	16
1-year-olds and older (includes a 3-year-old or older)	1:8 No more than two 1-year-olds per teaching personnel	16
2-year-olds and older	1:12 No more than four 2-year-olds per teaching personnel	24
3-year-olds and older	1:15 No more than six 3-year-olds per teaching personnel	30
4-year-olds and older	1:18 No more than eight 4-year-olds per teaching personnel	36

*\*\*The ratio and maximum group size for the age of the youngest student in the class is used for other mixed-age classrooms.\*\**

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## **RIGHT TO REPORT and GRIEVANCE**

### **Right to Report**

It is the policy of WELA, as well as being required by Osage law, that WELA Early Learning Academy staff report any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the proper authorities. The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) and/or the Osage Nation Social Services Department (ONSS) will be called to investigate and substantiate the claim. Verbal reports will be followed promptly with written reports by those persons required to report.

A copy of the report shall be immediately sent to the Osage Nation Social Services Department and/or Oklahoma Department of Human Services as well as to the Osage Nation Attorney General, and the Osage Nation Police Department.

Academy staff is responsible for creating and disseminating the reports to all agencies named above.

### **Grievance**

If the claim of child abuse and/or neglect is made against WELA or one of its staff members, parents/guardians must call Osage Nation Social Services to report the incident(s) at (918) 287-5335.

- Complaints shall be in writing, using the approved form
- Center Manager shall schedule and mediate a meeting between staff and parent/guardian
- If a resolution cannot be reached, Center Manager will forward the original complaint as well as a narrative of his/her attempt to resolve the conflict through mediation to the WELA Director. The Director shall make a final decision regarding resolution.

Grievance forms are available at each WELA site.

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## STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

ᄀᄀᄀᄀ Early Learning Academies offer hands-on learning opportunities and Osage language curriculum that is academically aligned with Oklahoma state standards and the Osage Nation language department. In addition, Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Osage Nation Community Outreach Department license the ᄀᄀᄀᄀ Early Learning Academies. The standards of all entities require regular maintenance of student records, up-to-date health and safety codes, and continued education, training, and professional development in the field of early childhood education for all staff members.

- **Center Managers**
  - Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, or Social Service
  - Child Development Associate (CDA) Certification
  
- **Lead Teachers**
  - Bachelor's or Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development
  - Child Development Associate (CDA) Certification
  
- **Teacher Assistants**
  - Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Development
  - Child Development Associate (CDA) Certification
  
- **All teaching staff**
  - Obtain a Child Development Associate (CDA) Certification within the first six (6) months of hire and maintain the renewal of their CDA as necessary
  
- **Curriculum Specialist**
  - Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, or Family Relations/Child Development
  - Facilitates effective implementation of evidence-based instructional practices by providing staff with instructional leadership through design, delivery, and professional development.
  
- **Partnering Parents in Parenting Education (PIPE) Educator**
  - Associate's Degree in Education, Business, or Communication
  - Promotes educational development with parents and children
  - Meets the needs of parents and the community on an individual basis

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## SUPPLIES

### **Individual Supplies**

The 4/2/2018 Early Learning Academies provide developmentally appropriate classrooms and environments that promote the success of each child. To make the transition between home and school, and in our endeavors to keep students comfortable, healthy and clean while in our care, parents/guardians are responsible for supplying necessary items for their child. Staff members will keep an open line of communication between the parent/guardian if their student needs any of the following supplies:

- Bottles
- Formula/breastmilk
- Baby food
- Diapers
- Baby wipes
- Bibs
- Complete change of clothing

The 4/2/2018 Early Learning Academies maintain a supply of emergency diapers and wipes; however, if a student uses any emergency supplies, the student's parent/guardian may be responsible for replacement of those supplies.

### **Extra Clothes**

Parents/guardians should send their student to the 4/2/2018 Early Learning Academy in comfortable, washable, and weather appropriate play clothes. All students need an extra set of clothes to be kept at the 4/2/2018 Early Learning Academy with each item labeled with the student's name. Please provide a clean change of:

- Socks
- Underwear
- Shirt
- Pants
- If possible, an extra pair of shoes.

Parents are encouraged to check their child's cubby periodically to ensure their child's clothes fit and are weather appropriate.

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## TOBACCO FREE/DRUG FREE ZONE

The Drug Free Policy for the staff of the Education Division and the ᏍᏚᏚᏚ Early Learning Academy supersedes the Drug Free Policy contained within the Osage Nation Employee Handbook. When it comes to the care and education of our Osage youth, drug/alcohol use cannot, and will not, be tolerated.

Academy staff are expected to report for work and remain at work in a condition which enables them to perform their duties and tasks free from the effects of drugs or alcohol. The possession, use, sale, purchase or distribution of illegal drugs or controlled substances or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or misusing prescription drugs on the Osage Nation's premises or in the conduct of related work off-site is prohibited and will result in termination from the ᏍᏚᏚᏚ Early Learning Academy.

It is the responsibility of all supervisors to enforce this Drug Free Workplace Policy. Failure to enforce this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees suspected of being impaired by or being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol shall be escorted from the work site by the employee's supervisor or security personnel to a safe and secure area. The supervisor shall immediately document the incident and initiate Reasonable Suspicion Testing.

### **Peyote**

The use, possession and/or transportation of peyote by Native American Church members in connection with the practice of a Native American Church (NAC) ceremony will not be considered a violation of this policy. The employee will not be subject to disciplinary action on the basis of such use, possession, or transportation in connection with the practices of NAC.

### **Legal Drugs**

The use of, or being under the influence of, physician prescribed ("legal") drugs by an employee while in the workplace, or while on work related travel, is prohibited to the extent that such use or influence may, in the Nation's opinion, affect the safety of co-workers or members of the public, the employee's job performance, or the safe and efficient operation of the Nation's facilities. Failure to report to management the use of prescription or legal drugs, which by their nature may impair the employee's ability to perform his/her duties, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

If management has determined that the employee does not pose a threat to his/her own safety, the safety of co-workers, and that the employee's job performance is not significantly affected by the legal drug, the employee may continue to work, even though they may be under the influence of a legal drug.

If management has determined that the employee does pose a threat to his/her own safety, the safety of co-workers, and that the employee's job performance is significantly affected by the legal drug, the employee may be required to take a leave of absence or comply with the appropriate directive as determined by management.

Any violation of this policy will subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **Alcohol**

The consumption or influence of alcohol during work hours is prohibited and will subject the employee to termination.

The Nation reserves the right to take disciplinary action, including termination, for an employee's off-duty involvement with drugs, alcohol, or controlled substances. Off-duty involvement includes, but is not limited to, incidents where such involvement is, in the Nation's view, damaging to the Nation's reputation or business, and/or is inconsistent with the employee's duties or image, or when off-duty behavior constitutes criminal behavior. This may include the review of criminal records for convictions with respect to drugs, alcohol, and controlled substances.

The Nation reserves the right to conduct unannounced searches for illegal drugs or illegal controlled substances on the Nation's premises. Acceptance of employment with the Osage Nation constitutes consent to searches for illegal drugs or illegal controlled substances on the Nation's premises.

Reasonable search of employees and their personal property, including vehicles, may be conducted at any time in order to maintain a safe, healthy, and efficient work environment. Staff who refuse to cooperate during an authorized search will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Parents/guardians and visitors to the Academy are also responsible for maintaining a safe, secure, and drug/alcohol free environment for students while at school. If a parent/guardian, or any authorized pick-up person or visitor, appears to be under the influence when on the premises, staff will call Osage Nation Police Department (ONPD) and the parent/guardian will not be allowed to leave with the student. Emergency contacts will be called to pick up the student. If emergency contacts will not pick up the student, staff will call Osage Nation Social Services for assistance.

### **Tobacco**

The Osage Nation recognizes its responsibility to promote the health and well-being of Osage Nation constituents and employees and provide a healthy environment in and around the Nation's properties. For this reason, the Osage Nation's government properties will be considered a smoke free area extending to all owned and leased properties of the Nation that are used by the Nation's government, including vehicles and other equipment. This policy applies to all of the Nation's employees, contractors, visitors, clients, and any others.

There are no approved smoking areas in, or around, any of the Nation's properties if the area around that property is also included as an area owned or leased by the Nation.

This policy prohibits the use of tobacco products including smokeless tobacco products, electronic smoking devices and vapor products whether or not they are considered smokeless. The use of tobacco for traditional, ceremonial purposes, however, is allowed with the permission of  $\mathcal{K}A\mathcal{C}\mathcal{N}\mathcal{K}A$  or his/her designee.

### **Medical Marijuana**

As 4/2/20 Early Learning Academies are federal grantees, we will provide a drug-free workplace as a precondition of receiving a grant from a federal agency. Marijuana, whether medical or recreational remains illegal under federal law. Further, the possession or use of marijuana, even if medical and prescribed by a doctor, is not allowed. The use of marijuana is prohibited and a confirmed positive result of marijuana may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from employment.

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## TRANSPORTATION

When a 4/2/2018 Early Learning Academy provides transportation services, the Osage Nation will ensure compliance with federal regulations.

Each vehicle used for providing transportation services is insured and equipped with:

- Communication system to call for assistance in case of emergency.
- Safety equipment for use in an emergency, including a charged fire extinguisher that is properly mounted near the driver's seat and a sign indicating its location.
- First aid kit and a sign indicating the location of such equipment.
- Seat belt cutter for use in an emergency evacuation and a sign indicating its location.

Transportation services only use school buses or allowable alternate vehicles to transport students enrolled in the 4/2/2018 Early Learning Academies that are equipped for use height-and-weight appropriate child safety restraint systems and have reverse beepers. All vehicles used to transport students who are 50 pounds and under, as part of the transportation services, are equipped for use of height-and-weight appropriate child safety restraint systems.

For each transportation vehicle there is at least one bus monitor on board at all times, with additional bus monitors provided as necessary, such as when needed to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities.

When transportation is provided, drivers and monitors will use sign-in sheets to track children as they board the bus at the bus stop, get off and board the bus at each destination. The drivers and monitors will perform checks, headcounts, and seat inspections at each stop.

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## WAH-ZHA-ZHE EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY CLOSINGS

It is the policy of ᄀᄀᄀᄀ Early Learning Academy to work with parents and guardians to ensure that our students are safe while in our care, both inside and outside the classroom. For this reason, the Osage Nation will close ᄀᄀᄀᄀ Early Learning Academy sites when driving conditions are unsafe, and any time community schools are closed. If the weather deteriorates after students arrive at WELA, parents will be notified to pick up their child/children.

If you have any concerns about offices being open during bad weather, we encourage parents and families to subscribe to Osage Alerts. This system will send notifications by phone call, email, or text message if the Osage Nation is closing some of its sites due to hazardous conditions. In order to receive notifications from the Osage Alerts system, please go to the Emergency Management web page on the Osage Nation website ([osagenation-nsn.gov](http://osagenation-nsn.gov)) and register for alerts.

There may also be other factors out of our control that may cause ᄀᄀᄀᄀ Early Learning Academies to close at a moment's notice, including, but not limited to, severe weather, utility problems, construction, wide-spread illness, etc. The ᄀᄀᄀᄀ Early Learning Academies are closed for all national and Osage Nation holidays, as well as professional training days and scheduled school breaks.

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**WAH-ZHA-ZHE EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have received and have read the Parent Handbook and will adhere to the policies set forth in the Wah-Zha-Zhe Early Learning Academy Parent Handbook. I have had an opportunity to clarify any questions which I may have concerning the expectations and services described in this handbook.

I understand that the Wah-Zha-Zhe Early Learning Academy Parent Handbook is not a contract and that the policies contained herein may be changed without notice at the sole discretion of the Wah-Zha-Zhe Early Learning Academy, and that the Wah-Zha-Zhe Early Learning Academy retains the right to interpret and apply the stated policies as it deems appropriate.

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Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Date

**Please sign and return to Center Manager**